



City of Gaithersburg Press Release

Contact: Public Information Director
City of Gaithersburg
301-258-6310
cityhall@gaitHERSBURGMD.gov

For Immediate Release

Celebrate the Perseverance Mars Landing with a Watch Party and Talks about How Space Vehicles are Built and How the Rover will Land

Gaithersburg, MD (February 3, 2021) The Gaithersburg Community Museum and the Rockville Science Center invite you to virtual Skywatching programs that highlight the arrival of the Perseverance Land Rover on Mars and explore how spacecraft are built to withstand distant travel. All ages are invited to join.

Perseverance: First Step on a Round Trip Journey to Mars

Wednesday, February 17, 7 p.m.

Register on Facebook [here](#).

At about 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 18, NASA's Perseverance rover will attempt to repeat Curiosity's dramatic and successful landing of more than eight years ago. The "Sky Crane" landing system appears at first glance to be an unnecessarily complex Rube Goldberg device with many paths to failure. But it worked in 2012. Can NASA and JPL prove it wasn't a fluke? Will it work again? This talk explores the landing procedure and the so-called "Seven Minutes of Terror."

Perseverance is just the first step in a far more ambitious, decade long vision to bring Martian rock back to Earth. Known as Mars Sample Return (MSR), this complex campaign involves not only landing multiple rovers on Mars but also landing a rocket that can then launch itself back into Mars' orbit. Learn about the steps of the MSR campaign and the science we hope to learn.

Speaker Eric Lyness is an engineer with the Solar System Exploration Division at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. He helped build the Sample Analysis at Mars instrument on Curiosity and worked on Mars time during the first 100 "sols" of the mission in 2012. He is now the software lead on the Mars Organic Molecule Analyzer instrument that will be aboard the Rosalind Franklin rover when it lands on Mars in 2023.

Perseverance Landing Watch Party

Thursday, February 18, 2:30 – 4 p.m.

After a six and a half month voyage, the [Perseverance Land Rover](#) is scheduled to land on Mars the afternoon of February 18. Its mission: to seek signs of ancient life and collect samples of rock and soil for possible return to Earth. The [Rockville Science Center](#) hosts a landing watch party. RSVP on Facebook [here](#).

Going to Space: Building Crafts for Distant Travel

Thursday, February 18, 7 p.m.

Program will stream on the [Gaithersburg Community Museum Facebook Page](#)

Ever wonder what goes in to making a spacecraft that can withstand such distant travel? Becky Lorenz, welder and founder of Aerospace Welding Services, will join us to talk about the complexities of fabricating equipment that can travel in space. Watch our craft video to join in the fun, too.

Located in the restored 1884 B&O Railroad Station complex near the intersection of Summit and Diamond Avenues in Olde Towne, the Gaithersburg Community Museum features educational exhibits and programs designed to spark interest and imagination about our City's history. Although the Museum is currently open by appointment only, it continues to host a robust services of virtual programs. Learn more [here](#). Nearby [Observatory Park](#) is open for self-guided tours. The [Gaithersburg Latitude Observatory](#) was one of six located around the globe that measures the wobble of the Earth its polar axis to aid in navigation. The Observatory was in operation from 1899 to 1982.

Follow on Facebook [@GaithersburgCommunityMuseum](#) and on Instagram at [@GburgCommunityMuseum](#). For more information, visit [gaithersburgmd.gov](#) or call 301-258-6160.

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